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MR. FETTERS: Members of the committee, my
16 name is Jack Fetters. I'm a Nevada State Legislative
17 Director for the United Transportation Union. I
18 represent approximately 250 railroad engineers and
19 conductors in this state.

20 As a Nevadan, I have followed the Yucca
21 Mountain problem with great concern. I love this
22 state. But the question that looms largest, in my
23 mind, is the safe transportation of this nuclear
24 material. Not once have I heard or read about the
25 problem of fatigue in the railroad industry as it

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1 pertains to hazardous material. The United
2 Transportation Union has always believed that one of
3 the significant solutions to the fatigue issue is to
4 hire and train enough people to cover the number of
5 employees who need rest and time off. Some of the
6 carriers feel that the only time that any employee
7 should have time off is when they think the employee
8 should be off and that should be only at the railroad's
9 convenience. Many railroad operating employees are
10 working seven days a week. Some are working eight,
11 nine or ten shifts in the seven days. One railroad has
12 a stated policy that they expect each employee to work
13 a minimum of six days per week. I could give the
14 committee many instances of the difficulty faced by our
15 members because the railroads simply refused to hire
16 and train a sufficient number of people to cover the
17 service.

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18 Railroad business now is the best it has ever
19 been. With fewer employees doing more work, I, for
20 one, don't understand why, with the significant growth
21 of business, that the railroads have not responded with
22 sufficient personnel. When the railroads finally do
23 begin to hire, and some have, the United Transportation
24 Union is very concerned about the length and quality of
25 training the new hires receive. It is very difficult

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1 for a new employee to remember, understand, and apply
2 all the information required and still be a productive
3 employee.

4 The railroads have endless rules and
5 penalties governing everything concerning the operation
6 of trains. These rules are added, not to promote
7 safety, but to simply overcome the carrier's loss at
8 either the courthouse or some labor tribunal. The UTU
9 supports the licensing or certification of conductors
10 similar to what is already in place for locomotive
11 engineers. This is to ensure that the people called on
12 to perform and comply with the rules, regulations and
13 laws understand what is required of them. There should
14 also be a requirement that there not only be standards
15 for conductors but there also should be a minimum
16 standard for instructors. The life of a railroad
17 locomotive engineer and conductor is one filled with
18 never knowing when you are going to be called on duty
19 and when you will return back to your loved ones. It
20 is a 24/7 job with the carrier expecting that you are

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21 rested and ready to go when the phone rings and heaven
22 help all of us if you fall asleep on the job. Unlike
23 the airlines, I have yet to ride a train that has an
24' auto pilot.

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